

# The Manager's Guide to Employee Morale

National Weather Service  
Eastern Region

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NWS Eastern Region

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

*Morale is an attitude of satisfaction with ones self esteem, both personally and professionally. Professionally, it is the desire to continue in, and willingness to strive for the goals of a particular group or organization.*

An important element in high morale is the feeling on the part of the individual that he or she shares the basic purposes of the groups of which he or she is a member--a state of mind that makes it possible for him or her to perform tasks with energy, enthusiasm, and self-discipline, sustained by a conviction that, in spite of obstacles and conflict, his or her personal and social ideals are worth pursuing.

From the viewpoint of management, the problem of employee morale is that of stimulating a feeling of togetherness, of a sense of identification with an interest in the elements of one's job, working conditions, fellow workers, superiors, employers, and the company, conducive to the achievement of the organization's aims.

High employee morale is important because productivity and efficiency of operations depend upon employee cooperation in attaining necessary standards. High employee morale is equally important because of the implications of low morale.

This guide is designed to provide Eastern Region managers and supervisors with guidelines to improve and/or maintain employee morale through fairness and communication during times of technological change. The guide also provides guidelines to effectively handle the impact of external factors and interpersonal issues on morale. High morale is conducive to the achievement of the Agency's goals and visions.

This guide also embodies the core values of the NWS. We at the National Weather Service value:

- Service above self.
- Our customers and partners.
- Respect and trust of others and the diversity of our agency.
- The open exchange of information and ideas.
- Commitment to integrity, teamwork, self improvement, high standards, and the scientific approach to our mission.
- An innovative and empowered workforce.

## 2. SUPERVISION AND MORALE

*A company pays the same for employees whether managed well or not, but what it gets from its employees depends not only upon the methods, equipment, and training that management provides, but whether the employees work with a will.*

The hypothesis that motivation and morale are influenced by the quality of supervision is well documented. Morale depends largely upon the skill of the supervisor in dealing with human nature.

People are complex, and complex situations require excellent interpersonal skills. One of a supervisor's primary objectives should be to find out how people feel about themselves, their work, and the workplace. A supervisor should utilize a number of simple rules:

1. Use active listening techniques.

Listening is the most important communication skill. About 55 percent of the time we spend communicating is spent speaking, reading, or writing; 45 percent is listening.

2. Do not interrupt.

Allow others to say what they want to say. Do not interrupt. When they are through, you may discuss, question, or take issue with what they said.

3. Do not give advice.

Once you are known to be a good listener, you automatically become a counselor. When people need support or advice, they will seek you out.

4. Avoid leading questions.

Again, stop talking. Concentrate and listen to what is being said.

5. Refrain from making judgements about the opinions expressed.

Be influenced by what is being said, not who is saying it. Many good ideas are lost, and a person's morale is lowered, because we do not like something about the presenter.

6. Do not express your own opinions, beliefs, or sentiments.

Remember, stop talking, do not interrupt, concentrate, and listen to what the other person is saying.

7. Avoid argument at all cost.

You cannot be a good listener and an arguer at the same time. Make others feel interesting, intelligent, and important.

8. Do not make a final decision until you weigh all the issues.

It may take longer to reach a final decision on an issue. However, making a decision prematurely without all of the facts is usually disastrous.

Additionally, comparisons of high- and low-morale in working groups consistently showed that high-morale is correlated to the following employee attitudes:

- (1) Self pride.
- (2) Pride in work group.
- (3) Job satisfaction.
- (4) Company satisfaction.
- (5) Financial satisfaction.
- (6) Sense of purpose or importance in work accomplished.

The attitude of a supervisor is an important factor in determining the attitudes in a work environment. Supervisors are generally accepted by the working group if his or her behavior helps achieve employee goals, needs, and aspirations.

Avoid the “set-up to fail” syndrome. This is a dynamic where employees perceived to be mediocre or weak performers function at the below-average level expected of them by their managers. Managers often compare weak performers with strong ones, using a certain set of assumptions. Based on these assumptions, strong performers are considered members of the “in crowd”, leaving weak performers on the outside. The end result is an overall negative effect on the morale and motivation of the perceived weak performers. This results in even weaker performance, leading to further problems.

Employee-oriented supervisors, equipped for dealing with interpersonal relations on the job, represent the most promising approach for achieving high employee morale and productivity.

### **3. EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING**

*Employees have a strong desire to participate in the determination of matters affecting them.*

In daily operations, supervisors are faced with the need for making decisions. Many, if not all decisions, either directly affect employees or are of interest to them because of the potential effects upon their daily activities. Since employees have a strong desire to participate in the determination of matters affecting them, it is important to realize the influence employee participation in decision-making has on both motivation and morale.

Studies have shown employees do better when some degree of decision-making about their jobs is possible, than when all decisions are made for them. Employees may be motivated by a supervisor who is constantly instructing them on how and when to perform tasks. However, if individuals can furnish their own motivation, the goals of which are clear and acceptable to them, then a higher level of performance and a higher level of morale will be realized.

Employee participation in decision-making, in a team environment created by permissive leadership, facilitates the development of internalized motivation, and serves to raise the level of employee morale.

#### 4. THE ROLE OF INCENTIVES

*The amount of money in the pay envelope does not, in itself, satisfy an employee's wants and needs.*

Investigations in the area of morale and motivation clearly demonstrate financial incentive is not sufficient, in itself, to achieve optimal results in morale. One of the most significant findings of psychological research in industry is that other incentives--nonfinancial in nature--play a tremendous role in satisfying employees, including:

- (1) The need to achieve a position of security.
- (2) The desire to achieve status and promotion.
- (3) The desire to earn approval of their peers.
- (4) The desire to build a set of social values around the job.

Employee attitude surveys reveal an ego involvement in the job which cannot be gratified by pay increases alone. Professional people are generally more concerned about a sense of personal worth and opportunities. A study comparing the motives of unsuccessful and successful executives has shown that the latter stress such motives as the need for achievement, to acquire status in the eyes of associates, and fulfillment of immediate and future goals. Supervisors want ego satisfaction; so do employees.

A listing of the types of Department of Commerce, NOAA, and NWS awards, both financial and non-financial appears in Appendix A.



## 5. IDENTIFYING THE LEVEL OF MORALE

*Not all people management problems are equally important. When you have more than one problem--and you usually do--it is crucial to work the most serious one(s) first.*

Unless met head-on, people management problems cause low morale. As a supervisor, how do you identify how serious a problem really is?

*Shark:* If a problem is a *Shark*, it is preparing to attack. It requires your total attention, right now! Postpone it, work something else first, and you're history.

*Elephant:* If a problem is an *Elephant*, it will trample you to death if you let it, but you have some time to deal with it. *Elephants* are what you concentrate on as long as you don't have any *Sharks*.

*Wolf:* If a problem is a *Wolf*, it lurks around, just waiting to jump on you. If you're lucky, *Wolves* will be the most serious problems you have, day in and day out. If you have *Sharks* and *Elephants*, work them first. If not, work on the *Wolves*. Don't ignore the *Wolves*, or they'll eat you alive!

There are numerous ways to identify the level of morale in the work environment. While 360-degree ratings or written surveys, either local or through the Survey Feedback Action process, serve as an extremely useful tool, office morale may also be readily identified by reviewing:

- Behavior which results in disciplinary actions (Shark).
- Excessive sick leave usage (Elephant).
- Union grievances (Shark).
- Decline in office productivity (Elephant).
- Lack of attendance at office meetings (Elephant).
- Lack of participation in office projects (Elephant).
- Aloofness (Elephant).
- Sarcastic laughter and joking among the staff (Wolf).
- Unusually passive or aggressive behavior (Wolf).
- Sudden changes in behavior (Wolf).
- Call-back availability (Wolf).
- Lack of office feedback (Elephant).
- Personal crisis or external issue (Elephant).
- Staff reaction when you walk in (Wolf).
- Confusion (Shark).

## 6. ISSUES AFFECTING MORALE

*The more supervisors and employees respect and trust each other, the easier it is to solve problems and maintain a higher morale.*

This section will address five major factors that affect morale: (1) fairness, (2) communication, (3) change, (4) external factors, and (5) interpersonal issues.

It is important to note the effects of shift work on morale, and the impacts to an employee's personal and family lives are not specifically addressed, and are beyond the scope of this guide. Shift work is a unique, but necessary element of the NWS work culture. Shift work is part of the job. However, supervisors should make every attempt to minimize the impacts of shift work on employees through alternative work schedules, flexibility in scheduling leave, and other creative ideas.

Shift work, in itself, does not cause poor morale. The appearance of unfairness, lack of communication, rapid disorderly change, external factors brought into the work place, and interpersonal issues left unaddressed do cause poor morale. Fairness, communication, change, external factors, and interpersonal issues are factors that crosscut all shifts, and are addressed below. Pitfalls and solutions are listed for each.

### (1) Fairness

#### Fairness Pitfalls:

- Prejudice, exclusion, and discrimination.
  - Prejudice, exclusion, and discrimination, perceived or real, cannot be tolerated. It leads to controversy, internal strife, poor performance, and poor morale.
- Inequitable reward system.
  - An inequitable reward system is known by all on station. It leads to controversy, internal strife, poor performance, and poor morale.
- Inequitable training.
  - Inequitable training issues are known by all on station. It leads to controversy, internal strife, poor performance, and poor morale.

- Unaddressed performance and conduct issues.
  - Unaddressed performance and conduct issues will tear at the fabric of your office. Left unaddressed, all lead to controversy, internal strife, poor performance, and poor morale.
- Lack of appreciation.
  - A lack of appreciation for staff work leads employees to assume that whatever they do goes unrecognized. Do whatever it takes to recognize employees for achievements--big or small.
- Trust issues.
  - Learn to trust your employees. Trust yields respect, higher achievement and higher morale.
- Lack of empowerment.
  - Employees perceive they are being controlled by management and not being allowed to be part of the decision-making process.
- Lack of productivity (perceived or real).
  - Employees perceive they are not being given a fair chance to contribute to the missions or goals of the organization, or are actually not contributing.
- Not sharing information equally.
  - If one or two individuals receive information before the entire staff is informed, this can lead to a perceived “click” or “in crowd,” or accusations of favoritism.

### **Fairness Solutions:**

- Know policies and regulations.
  - ☐ Don't expect your employees to know all the rules, if you don't.
- Develop a set of expectations.
  - ☐ By developing a set of expectations, employees will realize what is expected of them. Don't raise the bar too high, or too low.
- Treat everyone equitably and fairly
  - ☐ Spend time with people who have different values.
  - ☐ Be there when they need you.
  - ☐ Solicit feedback.
  - ☐ Listen and understand.
- Provide training for all employees.
  - ☐ Managerial.
  - ☐ Leadership.
  - ☐ Diversity.
  - ☐ Technical.
- Reward employees equitably (see Appendix B).
  - ☐ Use objective criteria; work through your local management team to develop these criteria, or establish an awards team. This is empowerment at work.
  - ☐ Solicit peer recommendations; you are allowing the staff to be a part of the process. This strengthens relationships and promotes trust.
  - ☐ Use on-the-spot awards; people like cash awards, but many also value something tangible like a plaque or certificate which can be displayed.
  - ☐ Use the Work Hard, Get Stuff Program.
  - ☐ Provide both individual and team awards.
  - ☐ Provide employees with a choice of time-off or cash awards.
  - ☐ Do not hand out awards every day.
  - ☐ Do not give awards to everyone.
  - ☐ Give awards to people who truly deserve them.
  - ☐ Awards worth giving are worth publicizing. This works twice: first with the award, then with peer recognition.
  - ☐ Praise employees for good work as often as possible. Catch someone doing something right!
- Nominate employees for regional and/or national awards.
  - ☐ Awards such as the U.S. Department of Commerce medal awards, the NOAA Administrator Award, or the Regional Cline Award may be the most meaningful and career satisfying award ever received by a valued employee.

- Ask ERH or WSH to recognize significant accomplishments.
  - Letters of recognition or appreciation from the Assistant Administrator for Weather Services, or the Regional Director, go a long way to instill a sense of pride and accomplishment.
- Write personal notes to employees.
  - Personal notes of thanks for a job well done, if sincere, are always appreciated by employees.
- Post letters of appreciation and thank you notes.
  - Letters and notes received from outside organizations for a job well done by an individual or group should be shared with the staff.
- Give credit where credit is due.
  - Always give credit where credit is due.
  - Never take credit for something others have done.
  - Give your staff members the credit, even if the supervisor was involved.
- Delegate and empower employees.
  - Delegating work through empowerment enables the manager to take care of other, possibly more pressing, matters.

## **(2) Communication**

### **Communication Pitfalls:**

- Rumor mill.
  - Failure to keep employees informed leads to a proliferation of rumors which may grow into larger problems.
- Unaddressed performance issues.
  - It is demoralizing for staff members to see poor performance go unaddressed. While a supervisor cannot publicize action taken against problem employees, he/she may inform concerned staff members of being aware of the problem and on top of the situation.
  - Work habits of individuals exhibiting poor performance will further deteriorate if left unaddressed.
- Unaddressed conduct issues.
  - It is dangerous and demoralizing for staff members to see poor conduct go unaddressed.
  - Conduct of individuals causing problems may further deteriorate if left unaddressed.
- Lack of appreciation.
  - Appreciation helps with an individual's sense of worth, making them more willing to exert themselves for the office. Lack of appreciation does the opposite, leading to poor morale.
  - Appreciation from other staff members, not just management, is an important factor.
- Lack of empowerment.
  - When a manager empowers an individual or group of individuals, and then takes back the authority, initiative is stifled and morale is seriously damaged.
  - Lack of empowerment leads to mistrust, and an unwillingness to make every effort for the good of the office.

### **Communication Solutions:**

- Make sure employees know what is expected of them.
  - Encourage all employees to ask questions regarding details and procedures.
- Clearly communicate the NWS mission, vision, goals, and values.
  - People want to know that they are a part of something bigger than themselves.
- Schedule frequent meetings.
  - All hands meetings.
  - Management meetings.
  - Forecaster meetings.
  - HMT/Meteorologist Intern meetings.
  - Systems management meetings.
  - Team meetings.
  - Staff members appreciate the opportunity to comment, make recommendations, ask questions, feel informed, and raise concerns.
  - Meetings become less contentious if held frequently with an open forum.
- MIC to work shadow shifts.
  - Shadow shifts provide the employee(s) with an opportunity to speak more freely than in the manager's office.
  - Shadow shifts provides a manager with an opportunity to experience employee on-the-job challenges, allowing you--the manager--to better understand their work and challenges.
- Come early (meet with midnight shift), stay late (meet with swing shift).
  - Meeting with shift workers on their hours shows employees that you value the type of work they do.
  - Meeting with employees on their hours provides an opportunity for conversations that would normally have to wait until the person is scheduled for normal business hours.
- Conduct daily operational meetings.
  - A daily meeting provides everyone with an opportunity to begin the shift with the same information.
  - Daily meetings also identify the problem(s) of the day for operations, administrative, equipment, and facility issues.
- Read and/or annotate the shift log.
  - Shift logs are an extremely useful tool to pass pertinent information from shift to shift. Stick to the facts, not commentary.
- Issue policy memos and summaries.
  - Clarify policy, respond to short-fused needs, and integrate into the Station Duty Manual--never leave the staff guessing.

- Provide two-way communication via regional conference calls.
  - Provide the Regional Director with honest and open feedback during MIC-HIC conference calls.
  - Provide ERH program leaders with honest and open feedback during program-specific conference calls.
- Encourage inter-office communication.
  - Visit a surrounding office. A visit is encouraged, but often difficult to accomplish due to time or budget limitations. Visits significantly improve inter-office coordination. This leads to better service and an increased pride.
- Maintain an open (cracked) door policy.
  - A cracked door means that you need to work uninterrupted, but will entertain discussion for an important issue that cannot wait.
- Listen.
  - This is probably the most overlooked, and often the weakest, communication skill--yet, the most important.
- Use favorable non-verbal communication (body language).
  - Staff members look at a manager's body language to determine if their comments are welcome or being taken seriously.
  - Different cultures and age groups may read body language differently. Be aware of this.
- Provide training in effective communication skills.
  - One-day courses and seminars on improving communication skills are inexpensive and benefit employees.
- Ask an employee to teach you and others a skill or procedure they do well.
  - This is a terrific way to work with an employee. Employees will appreciate that you recognize their ability, that you want to learn their skill, and that you selected them to provide the training.
- Foster esprit de corps.
  - Staff appreciation lunches.
  - Ethnic/diversity lunches.
  - Holiday party.
  - Family picnics.
  - Retirement parties.
  - Community service (Big Brother-Big Sister Program, Toys for Tots, etc.).
  - Activities with adjacent offices.
  - Suggestion box.
  - Sunshine fund, an employee fund used for significant events impacting an employee or his/her family (births, weddings, illnesses, funerals, etc.).



### **(3) Change**

As a supervisor, it is important to recognize the stages resulting from change that your employees may be experiencing.

Stage #1: Denial

Stage #2: Anger

Stage #3: Depression

Stage #4: Resignation

Stage #5: Acceptance

#### **Change Pitfalls:**

- Rapidly changing technology.
  - This has been prevalent in the NWS for at least 10 years. Most employees find frequent change stressful because it introduces apprehension, anxiety, and requires increased efforts in unfamiliar circumstances.
- Workload versus resource issues.
  - The modernized, smaller, and more efficient NWS has to accomplish a variety of new functions with less people and frequent budget constraints.
- Negative legacy.
  - Old office problems and situations, passed on through the years, can still foster negative attitudes despite the fact that these situations are no longer relevant to present day operations.
- Inequitable training.
  - Supervisors should make every effort to provide equal training opportunities for all employees to improve skills and promotional potential.
- Lack of empowerment.
  - Unless employees feel that they have a real ownership in the process, they will perceive that they are being forced to comply.

### **Change Solutions:**

- Training.
  - Provide training equitably so employees can enhance career potential and be equipped to deal with new technological changes.
- Education.
  - Formal or otherwise, this speaks to an employee's sense of accomplishment and self worth.
- Create Individual Development Plans.
  - The emphasis should be on "individual." This shows that you care about addressing an employee's unique needs.
- Familiarization.
  - When people are familiar with something, they usually lose the fear of it; stress and anxiety are reduced.
- Communication.
  - Conflict and poor morale are often proportional to an employee's lack of understanding. They need to know why.
- Justification.
  - When a new work-related issue is justified to the staff, they will accept the task easier because they understand the "why".
- Peers share successes.
  - When people collectively share the joys of accomplishment, it helps promote team spirit.
- Involve staff in setting priorities.
  - Establishing priorities is one of the most effective tools of accomplishment. When employees are involved, it introduces the magic of empowerment.
- Explore "letting go."
  - Letting go of the old way of doing business is a major undertaking for some people. Use innovative methods to help employees embrace change.
- Provide employees with opportunities to provide input.
  - This is another form of empowerment.
- Empower teams.
  - Team members will respect you, work harder, and achieve meaningful results if they know their efforts are not in vain.
- Encourage risk taking.
  - Do not stifle innovation because it could lead to meaningful change. Employee morale gets a boost when you are willing to consider their ideas, even though the ideas may run counter to established policy.

- Solicit employee feedback.
  - ☐ Change is more acceptable if communication channels remain open.
  - ☐ Listen to employees, since they are usually familiar with what works, and what does not work, in an operational environment.
- Conduct stress management workshops.
  - ☐ Stress management is helpful in organizations undergoing significant changes over a short period of time.
- Offer Employee Assistance Program.
  - ☐ It is your responsibility as a supervisor to suggest this resource.
  - ☐ In many cases, it could be helpful in dealing with change-related problems.

#### **(4) External Factors**

##### **External Pitfalls:**

- Individual(s) bring external issues into the work place.
  - ☐ Many times, personal issues spill over into the work place.
  - ☐ Issues can range from a significant change in one's life to something innocuous.
  - ☐ In either case, the supervisor must be aware that morale problems can arise from events that occur outside the work place.
- Workload versus resource issues.
  - ☐ This is the doing more with less syndrome--fast changing technology and a commitment to serve a varied customer base with dwindling resources.
  - ☐ Without an appreciation of the vision and commitment, employees have difficulty with this conflict. However, if they can be sold on the commitment, they will find ways to get the job done, and with improved morale.
- Career ladder issues.
  - ☐ Many NWS employees reach the top of their career ladder early in their career. Less frequent opportunities for advancement can become a demoralizing force.
- Budget implications (training, travel, etc.).
  - ☐ Budget cuts result in less travel, training, and local initiatives which can be demoralizing.
- Lack of empowerment.
  - ☐ Employees want to be part of the process. When employees are not empowered, they feel as though their contributions do not count.
  - ☐ Top down management often results in morale problems.
- Work issues imposed by management.
  - ☐ Whenever possible, employees should be involved in setting priorities, time lines, etc.
  - ☐ When employees are not consulted, or do not feel as though they are part of the process, morale will suffer.
- Inequitable training.
  - ☐ Be sure that training is made available to all employees in an equitable manner. If not, employees may accuse the supervisor of favoritism.
  - ☐ Favoritism, perceived or real, results in poor morale.

### **External Solutions: Personal**

- Recognition.
  - ☐ In order to effectively deal with employees who bring personal issues into the work place, the supervisor must first be able to recognize that an issue exists.
  - ☐ Often times, an employee may not admit to the supervisor that there is a problem or issues.
  - ☐ Supervisors should build a relationship of caring and trust with employees. This relationship will serve to help diagnose employees with personal problems.
  - ☐ Clues to help recognize personal issues include the quality or quantity of work, conduct issues, lack of concentration, and irritability.
- Contact.
  - ☐ Once an external problem or issue is identified, provide the employee with an opportunity to initiate a dialogue.
  - ☐ If an employee's personal problem is adversely impacting the work environment, the supervisor must reach out to the employee.
- Make yourself available.
  - ☐ In order to engage in conversations with employees, a supervisor must be available. This may require coming in early, staying late, or working on weekends.
  - ☐ Supervisors are encouraged to have an open door policy to discuss employee problems, issues, and concerns.
- Offer Employee Assistance Program (EAP).
  - ☐ If the situation warrants, EAP is available to help employees to deal with personal and family problems. The program is strictly voluntary and highly confidential. Help and professional assistance is available by calling (800) 227-1060.
- Express sincere empathy.
  - ☐ Show sincere empathy when discussing an external issue with employees.
  - ☐ If the employee believes that the supervisor does not really care, or is just going through the motions, meaningful communication will terminate. While the problem may eventually be solved by the employee, morale will suffer since it will be apparent, to the employee and the staff, that the supervisor does not care.
- Cover shifts as needed.
  - ☐ If an employee requires time off to deal with a personal problem, make sure he/she receives the time off--even if you have to work the shift yourself.
- Obtain training.
  - ☐ As a supervisor, it is worthwhile to obtain training in dealing effectively with troubled employees.

### **External Solutions: Work Related**

In addition to the above-listed personal solutions, the following actions can be taken to help mitigate external issues that arise in the work place.

- Explore alternate solutions.
  - Alternative Dispute Resolution is an informal process whereby parties voluntarily agree to attempt to resolve their differences. This process allows employees to participate in the resolution of his/her circumstances with a neutral third party, which facilitates workable solutions and improves morale.
- Convey concerns through channels.
  - If a problem cannot be effectively dealt with at the local level, the supervisor must convey employee concerns through channels. Do not pass the problem on to someone else. Rather, work the issue with EASC Human Resources and/or ERH representatives to find a suitable solution.
- Gather and share information.
  - A lack of communication and dissemination of information will have a detrimental effect on employee morale.
  - Employees do not like being kept in the dark. The sharing of information, especially in a fast-paced technological environment, is critical to the success of the Agency.
- Involve staff in re-invention and setting priorities.
  - Change in the NWS is occurring at a rapid pace. It is a well established fact that if employees are involved in re-invention and setting priorities, they have a stake in the outcome.
  - Employee buy-in serves as a catalyst for successful change. Being part of the process improves morale.
- Provide training.
  - Changes in the work place can be stressful. Over time, stress will lead to a decrease in morale. Training will mitigate the effects of change. Make every effort to provide all employees with the necessary training.

## **(5) Interpersonal Issues**

### **Interpersonal Pitfalls:**

- Individuals or groups negatively impacting employees.
  - ☐ Some people are simply incompatible with certain co-workers.
  - ☐ Some individuals are simply inconsiderate of those around them, and fail to consider how their own behavior affects others.
  - ☐ Some individuals are unaware that those around them may be working under time constraints. Their insensitivity interferes with their fellow employees' ability to work efficiently and may be resented.
  - ☐ Many employees resent people who are habitually late and/or use questionable sick leave. Such actions by a few individuals can have an adverse impact on the remainder of the staff.
- Individuals or groups negatively impacting the work environment.
  - ☐ Some people simply do not like the circumstances in which they find themselves.
  - ☐ Some people fail to prepare themselves adequately for coming to work (lack of sufficient rest, etc.), thereby aggravating what they already perceive as undesirable circumstances.
  - ☐ Creating disturbances or disruptions in the operations area (arguments, excessive talking, or loud discussion) disrupts workplace efficiency and necessary communication and coordination.
  - ☐ Some employees take undue advantage of opportunities to waste time (reading newspapers, surfing the internet, etc.), creating resentment among co-workers. This also reduces office efficiency.
  - ☐ Friction among employees can manifest itself in a refusal to communicate, thereby impacting the accomplishment of work and the overall mission.

### **Interpersonal Solutions:**

- Alternative Dispute Resolution.
  - Supervisors and other Management Team members should make a concerted effort to familiarize themselves with the principals of Alternative Dispute Resolution.
  - Alternative Dispute Resolution is an informal process whereby parties voluntarily agree to attempt to resolve their differences.
  - This process allows employees to participate in the resolution of his/her circumstances with a neutral third party, which facilitates workable solutions and improves morale.
  - Select potential mediators from non-management staff, especially those who have good interpersonal skills and the ability to obtain the cooperation of others.
- They don't have to like you.
  - People who do not like each other can "agree to disagree" on certain things without negatively impacting the work environment. There has to be a mutual commitment to work together to accomplish the mission. Stick to business.
- Take appropriate disciplinary action.
  - Consult with appropriate representatives at EASC Human Resources and ERH as necessary, and discuss the appropriate action(s) with Management Team members.
- Utilize the union as a partner in dispute resolution.
  - Seek agreement with the union regarding common goals and the desirability of providing mutual support in dispute resolution.
- Provide training in interpersonal skills.
  - Take advantage of articles, books, and seminars to provide all employees with additional skills in interpersonal relations.
  - Discussion of relevant interpersonal issues at staff meetings, or in small group meetings, is also useful in improving employee relations and morale.



## 7. FINAL SUGGESTIONS

*When you solve a people problem, don't just settle for getting things back to normal. Try to develop a better situation leading to higher morale.*

Solve a problem in a way that increases the trust between you and your employees. The more you trust each other, the easier it is to solve problems, and improve the morale.

Solve a problem in a way that helps employees manage themselves more effectively. The better your employees are at managing themselves, the fewer the problems, and the higher the morale.

Solve a problem in a way that increases the employee's sense of responsibility for, and commitment to, the job. A strong commitment to the job prevents many problems from occurring, and contributes to higher morale.

The supervisor's checklist in Appendix B is designed to provide an implementation strategy for solving problems, which contributes to a higher morale.

## Appendix A

### **TYPES OF AWARDS**

#### **U.S. Department of Commerce**

Gold Medal Award (individual or group)  
Silver Medal Award (individual or group)  
Bronze Medal Award (individual or group)  
National Diversity Award

#### **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

NOAA Administrator's Award (individual or group)  
NOAA Unit Citation  
Best Practices Award (individual or group)  
Technology Transfer Award  
Employee of the Month  
Diversity Spectrum Award (individual or group)

#### **National Weather Service (National)**

National Isaac M. Cline Award (individual or group)  
Letter of Appreciation (individual or group)  
Letter of Recognition (individual or group)  
National Diversity Award

#### **National Weather Service (Regional)**

Regional Isaac M. Cline Award (individual or group)  
Length of Service Certificates  
Letter of Appreciation (individual or group)  
Letter of Recognition (individual or group)  
Regional Diversity Award

**National Weather Service (Local)**

Local Isaac M. Cline Award (individual or group)  
Quality Step Increase  
Special Act Award (individual or group)  
On-the-Spot Award (individual or group)  
Cash-in-your-Account Award (individual or group)  
Time Off Award (individual or group)  
Work Hard, Get Stuff Award (individual or group)  
Certificate of Appreciation (individual or group)  
Certificate of Recognition (individual or group)  
Letter of Appreciation (individual or group)  
Letter of Recognition (individual or group)  
Local Diversity Award

**Professional Associations**

American Meteorological Society (individual or group)  
National Weather Association (individual or group)

## Appendix B

### SUPERVISOR'S CHECKLIST

Whenever a supervisor encounters a problem with an employee or group of employees that could impact office morale, the following checklist should be followed to solve the problem successfully.

- ☐ State the problem specifically in terms of:
  - ✓ its source (who is responsible for causing the problem, *not* who is responsible for fixing it); and
  - ✓ the type of problem it is (fairness, communication, external, change, interpersonal, etc.).
- ☐ Ask questions and gather all the facts you need to make an informed decision. Be mindful of the employees right to representation.
- ☐ Identify the options available to you for solving the problem, now that you understand exactly what the problem is. Discussions with your designated Human Resources Advisor at the Eastern Administrative Support Center (EASC) and ERH may be required.
- ☐ Choose an option, and a series of steps, that you will follow (in coordination with EASC and ERH, as required).
- ☐ When appropriate, involve the Local Union Steward.
- ☐ Document the option you chose.
- ☐ Act. Implement your decision.
- ☐ Evaluate how well your decision worked. If the solution is one that is implemented over a period of time, evaluate its success at specific points along the way. If it doesn't seem to be working out as expected, go through the steps again to see if you can find a better approach.

Following this checklist will lead to discussion, understanding, acceptance, and action. This will result in improved productivity, satisfaction, and improved morale.